6/29/72

Dear Howard,

We both appreciate your letter of the 26th and the enclosed memo marked "confidential". I feel it merits immediate response. I haven't read the other enclosures because I have time to complete a letter before lunch. I have skimmed the Cohen memo. I do not have that nation article, although I thought I did. I sup ose t is is another sample of my selfishness and secretiveness, that somebody has it and hasn't returned it. There will be less possibility in the future, believe me. If it presents no problem, I'd like a copy for the completeness of the file and to see if I can detect anything else in it that I would not have understood so long ago. I have more on Acheson, should you be interested, Dick Whalen's notes on his dealings when A was undersecretary.

I have not heard from Sylvia and do not expect to. Although I told them not to write, I expect to hear from Gary and Jerry, from Jerry a mixed denunciation and defense, if I know him and the incredible ego he has developed. He has been secretly angry with me for more than a year because I have tried to get him to analyse himself and his immature thinking and childish behavior. I had sensed it but said nothing. After reading you letter, Lil for the first time told me he had several times told her he was so mad at me xx he didn't know if he could take it much longer.

Because I have felt that you have the right and obligation to make your own and independent decision, I have, to the degree possible, as you know, refrained from arguing. You know, instinctively, that I felt your decision was wrong. But it is and must be your own decision, for it is you who will have to live with it and any possible consequences. We cannot foresee the future, cannot anticipate what can happen at any particular time, can't really know what attention anything can get, and do know that forces and events outside the control of man can make overnight changes. We can only hope for the best.

I have long been aware of the conflict I face on this, and I long ago decided that there is no real conflict. I have never, ever, at any time, even suggested to anyone that I ever had any intention of relinquishing any rights I have to my own work. This is not in any sense an unusual position. It is traditional in writing as it is in research. However, my basic decision, which I think any dispassionate examination will show to be a decision against my personal or selfish interest and was so recognized at the time is now close to two years old (from memory). If you want to assure yourself on this point, when you are here again check my suit file on two things in particular that I recall: that labelled "penal" and the "memo of transfer". (I knew of the latter through Whalen in the mild part of the tag end of 1966 when the B.Eve.Post, Mike Mooney, sent him to see me. I recall that we could go to supper at the Peter Pan without topcoats. Either one of these suits had the potential of attracting enough attention to make publishing possible. You will find that I exhausted my administrative remedies redundantly, yet restricted myself to the area of the clothing/pix, and when you read the book-length papers in that case, I went far out of my way and at the risk of antagonizing the judge to eliminate any possibility, no matter how remote, of what now depends. You will also find that this roughly coincides with my offer to Cyril for a joint breaking of the case. As of today I would probably join him in that. As of then, had he the principle he professes, we could have really done things. If you read that file when you were here, you know he never responded. If I have much more, and much you must know, this is more than I need to decide for myself what his real motive is, whether or not he has conscious awareness of it. This is not a new position with me. Lesar must remember how long ago I discussed it with him, making him answer questions so he could see it for himself rather than telling him my view. I don't think the most dishonest mind can examine these files and not see that my decision was both unselfish and against personal interest. There are so many things I t ought or doing and didn't do because I recognized this potential. Filing a suit to challenge the legality of the contract itself and limiting it to that is one. So, to the degree a man can be confident of his own motives and motivation, I am without doubt of my own. Going along with this I have an equally clear record on those who I have known to be my enemies longer than you realized I knew. You never told me that Sylvia had been waging this campaign against me, but I could sense it from a number of things not connected with you and going back to before I knew you. I have all the reading I need in the lunch she so grossly misrepresents, in the summer of 1967, when she

argued lies on the dating of the work. This was a reflection of the inner Sylvia, the corrupting influence of the young-man hangup, the persisting dedication to Epstein so long after he had exposed himself, so long after she protested often and loudly to the contrary. I was also acutely aware that while she went out of her way to try to do things for others, as in personal appearances, she made me the conspicuous exception. The only defense I can recall of any of the libels and slanders then alleged against me she could find time to summon was that I was impoverished by this work, had to use worn-out carbon paper. Big deal. She had countless opportunities to get me on talk shows but never once did it. Did I need more, really? But you know that this did not deter me and I thereafter continued to do what I then regarded served the common good. I am content to rest on this part of the record.

However, I think it might, in the end, be a good idea if you would not record what you can remember of this campaign in more detail than in this letter. Whether or not you send me a copy is separate. Making the record is the thing I now regard as important. We do not know what the future will hold, what we may have to face, do or try to undo. And we do, all of us, hold an obligation to history. You know I have not purged my files, that all my errors are carefully preserved. I have not discarded a <u>single</u> rough draft. We all owe it to the future to permit honest evaluations of each of us. Perfection is not a state of man. We all err. On the other hand, I do not hide pride in my record. I think for the volume of my work, even not considering ~~under~~ the conditions uder which I did it, it compares at least favorably with any other serious work of its magnitude and at the risk of being called an ego, I say there are few~~s~~ much less intensive and extensive that can meet its standard. This has the side intent of preparing you to face the possibility that you may later decide that your present decision was the wrong one. If that is the case, while you may not be without regrets, you will have the essential reassurance an honest man needs and really all he can have, he did what he then considered right.

As you can see, I am not addressing your proposals to yourself and the conditions to your collaboration. I am not going to reread to see if my impression is correct. It may not be. I think at one point you note anticipation that they may not be, or may be only in part, or that you may be double-crossed. I consider any or all possible, and I suggest you do more thinking about this. One of the things I think you should consider is addressing what you have in mind in the form of a letter. You should be aware that it could further turn Wecht and Sylvia off. "Nonetheless, I believe it serves your interest and not yours alone. If you do this, I would also encourage you not to do what I do, knock it out and send it. I'd go over it with care and thought.

I know what you are referring to when you say, "To quote Sylvia apologizing for Wecht in another case, "it would be too humiliating'." It would not have been if Wecht had the motive and principle he professes. There was a simple formula available to him in court and more so and easier outside it. There is but one with whose "humiliation" Sylvia is not concerned, and I do not have her in mind. She has, probably without recognition of it, by normal and reasonable standards humiliated herself over and over again, beginning, to my knowledge, with Epstein. She is as blind as she is brilliant.

Here I digress so you can understand what I have not articulated. I have disclosed my own awareness of Sylvia's attitude toward me so far back. Yet I did not discourage your association with her and told you you had much to benefit from it. She <u>is</u> that brilliant. I think this addresses my ability to detach myself from the personal. Yet long before Epstein(k) I knew she had to have serious emotional problems. Really from the time I first met her, a Sunday afternoon I spent with her where my recollections are so clear I can show you the sweater I was wearing, having made her apartment my first stop on a trip to New York. Her manner of dress and her abnormal relationship with her cat were dead giveaways. We are old cat lover, have had as many as 28 or 29 at a time, have nursed sick ones as parent to children, so I am not unsympathetic to attachment to animals. Hers was sick and a substitute for human relationships of real meaning, and she deliberately made herself unattractive. That I never told you these things is not because I was ever unaware of them. It is because I did not want to prejudice you and because I thought you could benefit much from association with her.

There is another area into which I want to get, so I'll skip your letter because I think I recall a few cautions I should call to your attention. You can then decide whether or not my view has substance. Again, it is not to change your decision, for that is made. It

is, rather, so that there will be as little of which you are not aware as there can be. "...I cannot know in advance who will prove 'right', and whichever way I decide, I will suffer misgivings. The last part is simple. I repeat, if you are confident the decision is the correct one, for you, at this time, with what you can now know and understand, you may properly, later, have misgivings, but it should not be "suffering". We can never know in advance. We can only be honest in advance. You have to have misgivings now. The suffering should precede decision. Regret, perhaps, can follow, but the word "suffer", if is it what you really mean, is wrong and you should not later react that way. On the first part, I will do no more than ask you to think about it further.

"I have an obligation to help Wecht." I add emphasis.

(The delay may be for reasons other than your reluctance. Think about this. Jerry told Jim by phone that the Friday council of war was off. Jim called me to say he could not come up today. Jerry appears to have mentioned my letter to Jim.)

If Wecht is really "questioning whether he should ask me for help", and if Sylvia's explanation, that it is "too humiliating", is correct, then I think you need an entire new line of introspection and evaluation.

In my opinion, your representation of your outline is deficient intwo ways, and I go against my own belief and principle to caution you: you include what can lead him into a hassle where he would have poor basis and you omit some of the more obvious. He is limited to what is covered by the contract and to what exists in physical form, not in anyone's mind, under both contract and law. This is not to say he might not be wise to try to extend it, as I so often have. I'll go no further. My interest here is you and your future, not him and a selfish project I oppose becausexx, well you know enough aboutxmy.

I think without intending it you are unfair to Sylvia on the second page. She has boxed herself in and there is little she can now do except to be honest with herself and me. And you. In no case do I expect it. I know of no case of it in her history. ("change her attitude and cause her to rethink.") Like all my letters, this was not thought out in advance and I did no read it after I wrote it. There is always the danger of innocent error, but I know myself well enough, I think, to know that I am not ever deliberately dishonest. I could not now have the knowledge of this letter you do. I did it and it is out of my mind, which is occupied by other problems.

Later reference to the use of my material and her attitude. You deceive yourself if you do not realize they have deceived themselves and how.

I will appreciate updating, for despite my frequent abdications of the role, I am the only foreman we have. I can only hope the need does not come.

You are right about my learning from this. But if you can tell me what I can learn other than living in perpetual mistrust and isolation, I'd appreciate it.

On the question of Sylvia's alleged concern for my circumstances, if for a moment it was sincere, do you not think she'd have found some way to do even some little thing?

Lil will soon be calling me to lunch, and after that I want to get to other things. You have often heard me use the phrase "intellectual judo". You are aware that I am maintaining silence about all of this. What I have written to others I have sent you, all of it. However, to the degree you can, I hope you will put me in the best possible position to cope with what I continue to hope will not eventuate but what I cannot ignore well may. When the time comes, I will have little time, and I do not delude myself into thinking I have any real influence of meaningful connections. If there is the damage I consider not worth the small benefit possible, I'd like to be as prepared as possible to offset it.

We both appreciate your concerns, your expressions of them, and the maturity beyond your years that you have expressed.

Sincerely,